

EDITORIAL PAGE

The Observer

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CANCELLATION OF WAR DEBTS.

Secretary of the Treasury Houston has admitted that Great Britain has suggested the cancellation of foreign debts, during the negotiation of the Versailles treaty and since. A British statesman a short time ago acknowledged such a proposal on the part of his government, and added that there was no reason why Great Britain should be ashamed of it, because the proposal involved the wiping out of all war debts among the Allies, and Great Britain herself would lose in the process, because other nations owed her more than she owed the United States.

That appears to be true, and thus weakens the charge that the British have been trying to make the American people pay their war debts. It does not, however, prove that the principle is valid or practicable. Neither the British people nor the American people seem likely to endorse such cancellation.

So far as this country is concerned, there is no room for doubt. The American government representatives at the Peace Conference are said to have steadfastly opposed cancellation, and the government has not modified its position since. The public, so far as can be judged by the utterances of the press, is overwhelmingly against such action.

There are influential statesmen and business men in both countries who would welcome the step because of certain financial and commercial benefits expected to follow from it. The general public, however, feels that so great a gift is uncalled for—that it might be mischievous in its economic results, and that it would certainly be unfair to the great mass of citizens who bought war bonds to provide the money for those foreign loans and whose taxes will be high until the loans are paid.

USE YOUR PEN.

Write to your senator and congressman occasionally. They need your counsel and advice.

Senators and congressmen are not little tin gods, nor yet big ones. They are just human beings like the rest of us—people whom we have picked from our midst and sent to Washington to represent our will in the affairs of the national government.

Don't get the mistaken idea that your duty ends with casting your vote. That is only the beginning.

It is your duty to keep our representatives in Washington advised as to the attitude of this particular community relative to the various matters that come up in congress. Otherwise they will not know what we think—what we desire—what we expect them to do, and how they should vote in order to truly represent the people of their districts.

Senators and congressmen receive many letters, but most of them are from professional politicians or people who have an axe to grind. They seldom hear from the rest of us, and as long as we are indifferent to our interests we can hardly complain if they become so themselves.

Write them nice friendly letters and tell them how you stand and how your neighbors feel. They will appreciate it for two reasons. First, because they are really desirous of doing something for us if it is possible for them to do so. Second, they are anxious to keep in touch with the sentiment of their districts, lest they find themselves "in bad" at the next election.

Write to them. You will find that they are quite human, and will be as fair with you as you are with them.

WORKING FOR RATS.

Government experts estimate that it keeps 200,000 men working full time to support the nation's rat population. There are at least 100,000,000 "common brown rats" in the country, and they destroy \$2 worth of foodstuffs a year apiece. That makes the cost of their upkeep \$200,000,000, and it takes 200,000 men, at \$1,000 a year apiece, to produce that much.

The nation's standing army is fixed by Congress at 175,000. It is a situation, indeed, when it is a matter of the nation's able-bodied men to support the rats than it is to support the army.

At it: There is a force of men to apply in it. As I set my hand to the plow again. —CARL P. BANGERT, Aug. 27, 1920.

The Law

Must Make Good. The laws of Italy are strict with regard to theaters and circuses. Every act or performance announced on the program must be given. No exaggeration by means of piebalds, or other means, to mislead the public, is permissible. For each infraction a fine is imposed.

THE OFFICE CAT



—By JUNIUS—

ROMANCE.

He met her in the meadow As the sun was sinking low, They walked along together In the twilight's glow-glow. She waited until dusk, He'd lowered all the bars, Her soft eyes bent upon him As radiant as the stars. She didn't smile or thank him— In fact she knew not how, For he was but a farmer lad And she a Jersey cow. —Junius.

AN ANSWER TO ALL OF 'EM.

By a Big Boy. Dear Office Cat, if I should choose To piddle you some fashion news; 'Tis this, and only this, I'd say, Bring back the clothes of yesterday. Poor silly girls, why don't you choose

A pair of high-top leather shoes, Red flannel underclothes, so warm, To keep you sheltered from the storm.

Put on an old hoop-skirt, and then You'll hear us joking from the men, Your dress should almost drag the street

And hide your profile to your feet, A collar should enclose the neck— And that's the proper dress, by heck, I hate to see you girls show

The milky whiteness of your arms, It seems so vulgar, don't you know, To advertise God given charms.

And powder, goodness, what a sin, We much prefer the natural tan— If you don't use, don't begin, It's so offending to a man.

Lay by your garter and eroge de chine, Procure a dress of amber black, With fifty pleats around the skirt, And nicely buttons down the back; Instead of being a dream,

My dears, you'll simply be a scream, Your loveliness and youth must hide Behind the stern staid clothes of pride;

On with the old, on with the new, You fluffy, powdered girls, adieu. —

Though priests on baby cabs have been reduced, the manufacturers say there is no demand for them. Probably baby wants a motor car. —

The unhappy coincidence that the payroll and prices are going down together makes us wonder where we get off at. —

But, we reflect the happy days have gone by when the payroll made us oblivious to prices. —

Force of habit is illustrated in Harding's choice of the capitol porch as the place where he will take the oath as president. —

Bob Cotner says HELL in such a way as to make that word almost glorious. —

1-9-2-1. (Cataline.) A good man once observed a kid, Puffing a cigarette, And thus addressed the child, (he did),

In tones filled with regret, Said he, "My lad—your ma'll tell you, If this again occurs," The kid replied, "She'll whip like a—"

For this is one of her's. —

People who live in stone houses, as Sheriff Lee Warnick sees it, shouldn't kick on the bill of fare. —

A real friend is a gink who loves you in spite of your failures and the greater a fizzle you are, the greater he seems to love you. —

The knack of floating debts enabled some folks to be in the "win." —

"Dark Oliver says that the reason he don't wash his car is that it rains every time he does, and his garden don't need the moisture. —

HE SMOOKED, ANYWAY. Officer (while examining applicant for army): "Got any scars on you?" Applicant: "No, but I got some cigarettes over there in my coat." —

TWINKLE, LITTLE STARS. "My daddy is a Mason," stated little Mable, "and my mamma is a Eastern Star." "And what are you?" her chum asked. "I'm the little twinkle." —

"If dirt were trumps what hands some men would have!" —

Whens you think little of a person say as little as you think. —

An order-liner gives customers what they ask for, a salesman gives customers what they ought to have. Don't blame a successful man for bragging a bit—no one with a good catch of fish goes home by way of the back alley. —

LEGENDS OF OLD-BELGIUM



Valley of the Meuse in Belgium.

ASKED to pluck the preflattest flowers of our Belgian folklore, I stand blinded and hesitating. What shall I choose in this bouquet, over rich in its mingling of brilliant colors and tender hues? Shall it be pearls of sacred mistletoe fallen beneath the Druid's knife; lilies grown in the shadow of convents and monasteries; roses, reddened with the blood of tournaments and the carnage of battle; or, perchance, pale daisies of the fields springing up unheeded amid the cow pasture? All equally are precious, writes Louis Lagasse de Loch in the London Times. Daughters of a fertile land sown in the course of ages by storms let loose from the four corners of the earth, are they not the expression, the poetry, the sap of love and hate, the very soul, in a word, of a people fashioned by martial bows and bathed in the sunshine of idealism?

Every Belgian is thrilled by the past. It is his staff and bread of life. Hence his love of cavalcades, joyous entries and processions, the ever recurring delight of most of our villages. Great taste is often displayed in the ordering of these parades, in the building of the triumph— to which Rubens and Jordaeus did not seem to derive their talent. And it is as if the figures of legend and history which pass through our streets had stepped down from the canvas of old masterpieces to be closer to the creases of the crowds.

Sometimes the ceremony represents but an episode, a scene of chivalry or of mystery from the middle ages. In Bruges, suddenly awakened from its melancholy miracle of the holy blood, the triumphal escort of a prince consecrated in the conquest of the holy land moves in a rolling stream of glistening steel amid the clamor of gilt stiles and peacocks' brooches, the clashing of arms and the emboldened point of trumpets.

Supreme Drama of All Time. At Furnes, on the last Sunday in July, the procession of "penitents" re-enacts the supreme drama of all time, for weeks the city prepares for it. The actors' parts are more coveted than public honors; some are jealous, guarded as hereditary rights. Through the dense crowd, pressing ever closer and closer, the reversed figures pass in procession. And the Christ appears, weighted down by his cross, a living and staggering Christ, sweating all the blood runs from him. A sister of religious fervor passes over the faithful. "Mercy!" a penitent cries aloud in pain. Every window is a garden of tapers, candles and lights whose flames flicker in the wind blowing from the sea. Sacred chants mingle with the piping of reeds, the noise of rattles and the whirling of horns. The crowd sobs and sways and wrings its hands and falls into prayer as, following the Crucified one, the penitents pass. The men in sackcloth and the women closely veiled do penance, and their naked, torn feet bleed on the stones of the road. Perchance beneath their clanks of lurid noble linens, whose flaxen hair and white bodies are the love treasures of this sensuous and mystic Flanders, are paying the ransom of a kiss!

Mons, the home of the guardian spirit of the British army, is the theater every year of the famous Lammoc display which ends the procession of St. Waudru. At midday to the tolling of the great bell, otherwise heard only as a war alarm, St. George gives battle to the dragon. After a deadly combat, the dragon, according to rite, crashes down in the dust, shot through the nostrils, and the devils are chastised by the brave followers of the victorious knight. Before entering the lists the sabled "best" flays the crowd with mighty blows of his tail. The people of Mons believe that a blow from the tail brings

good luck. What matter if it hurts? On occasion both municipal officials and clergy take part in the festivities, and frequently our ancient customs put them to uncouth tests. Each year a procession leaves Grammont and goes to the Oudenberg. Prayers are said in public, after which loaves and fishes are distributed to the crowd, and the burgomaster offers the priest a silver loving cup filled with white wine in which tiny minnows are swimming. A wry face, a grave gulp and the career of a little fish ends in the pastoral stomach. And so it goes till every notable and every minnow has faced the same ordeal. At nightfall huge bonfires upon the surrounding hillsides light up the countryside. This said that these customs date back to the worship of Ceres.

"Three Entwined Ladies." The story of the warlike virtues and tragic deaths of the "three entwined ladies" is another jewel of Meuse folklore. In 1574 Bouvignes is furiously attacked by the king of France. The town is taken, but the valiant citizens of Crevecoeur still hold out. Assault after assault is repulsed. Alas, the defenders are now a bare hundred, including old men, women and children, then fifty, then ten—at last three young and beautiful women. "The Ladies of Crevecoeur" still hold out desperately. They are about to be taken. Rather than serve at a king's feast, they climb to the topmost ramparts and entwining their arms throw themselves into the Meuse, forevermore the gentle guardian of their womanly honor. Until this day the stream continues to weave its liquid blue shroud over their white bodies.

Doubtless the folklore of Flanders differs from the Walloon traditions and customs. The latter are light and gay, the former rich in color and full of quaint beliefs. The Flemish ceremonies begin by prayer and the solemn warnings of priests who thunder from their pulpits—"Hell, mild ye, opens beneath the feet of blond maidens who trip the merry dance; beware for misfortune will surely visit the stable and weigh upon the head of the brawny yeoman too easily tempted by foaming beer." But the last words of the priestly warning have scarce died away before the festive board cracks beneath the good things of this earth, and ardent youth feels that it lives. As evening falls on the gay Sundays of August, ribald songs and old-time dances end these village fetes worthy of a Rubens or a Teniers.

WHITTLING OUT OF FASHION Decline of Ancient and Honorable Pastime So Marked as to Have Been Noted.

Come to think of it, there is some truth in the statement that whittling is a lazy or tired man's pastime, is going out of existence. A workkeeper says: "I used to set a box out in front of the store for the boys to set on, and the next day they'd be 'nigh' left of the box 'ceptin' a lot of white-tin's littered like around the sidewalk. But now a box will last just about all summer. . . . No, whittling ain't what it were!" At a railway station the agent remarked that whereas a waiting-room bench had a shorter life in the older days "than a twain harmonic," the present benches in the men's waiting room over which he had jurisdiction had lasted well on to 18 months. And at post office, blacksmith shop, tavern and elsewhere the crowd no longer gnaws itself with knife and soft wood. Perhaps you are too busy. The workkeeper referred to goes has another theory. He says: "This is too cussed; has today to what it used to be. . . . Exchange.

The Bookworm

Mary A. Nichols, County Librarian. La Grande, the seventh city in Oregon, ranks eleventh in the size of its library, according to the state librarian's report to the legislature. The Dalles, Molford and Hood River, whose population is less than ours, rank among the first ten libraries because they have been operating as county libraries. Watch us grow now!

The Publishers' Weekly recently printed a list of the 100 most popular books of fiction of the past 25 years, arranged in the order of their popularity. Of course, this is based on the number of copies printed and sold to date. "Quo Vadis" heads the list, with "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," "The Rosary," "David Harum," and "Mr. Britling Sees It Through," following. The complete list is on our bulletin board. You will find it most interesting.

Now that branch libraries are started in Union, Elgin and Cove, we will loan to residents of these places through these libraries. Otherwise we would be trespassing, instead of aiding them. Residents of the county living on rural routes from the above post-offices, please place R. F. D. on your requests, so we may mail direct to you. About 200 new children's books

have been placed on the library shelves recently.

You are going to want to read Philip Gibbs' "Now It Can Be Told." He was a prominent war correspondent and he has some startling things to tell us now that the bar of censorship is raised.

"What to See in America," by Clifton Johnson, gives a chapter to each state in the Union, briefly mentioning the attractive places, with facts and general interest concerning its present and past that add to the traveler's zest in visiting it. The photographic illustrations are very numerous and quite alluring.

William Stearns Davis, author of "A Friend of Caesar," "Victor of Salamis," and other well known historical novels, has written a "History of France; from the earliest times to the Treaty of Versailles," which has become at once the standard single-volume history of France in the English language. It is more than a mere history; it is a colorful romance.

Are you interested in spiritualism? Mrs. May Wright Sewall, in "Neither Dead Nor Sleeping," has given an unreserved account of many years' study of psychical experiences including the cure of disease. It is of interest not only for lovers of the subject, but also because Mrs. Sewall has been a very prominent figure both nationally and internationally in the woman suffrage movement and in the education of women.

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WE WILL MEASURE UP

It was said of George Washington that the office of President of the United States was 'cut to his measure'—it fitted him better than any other man of his time.

The life of each of us is cut to our measure—it is up to us to recognize and live up to its full capabilities. This institution is doing its best to fulfill the purpose for which it came into being—to assist the people of this community, through the wise management of finances, to attain their full share of success.

—On Washington's Birthday this institution is closed, to honor the memory of a great man who measured up to the work cut out for him.



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